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CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY OF BORROW AREAS FOR DAM 87,
SOURIS RIVER BASIN PROJECT, WARD COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA

CRM332

AD-A226 528

Report Prepared for:
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District
St. Paul, Minnesota

Report Prepared by:
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Bismarck, North Dakota

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Principal Investigator

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June, 1990

Purchase Order No. DACW37-90-M-0135

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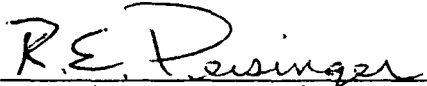
REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No 0704-0188 Exp Date Jun 30, 1986	
1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified			1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS		
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY			3. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT		
2b. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE			Approved for public release; distribution unlimited		
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S) CRM332			5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION Cultural Research & Management Inc		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION U.S. Army Engineer District, St Paul		
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Bismarck, N.D.		7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) 1421 USPO & Custom House St Paul, MN 55101-1479			
8a. NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION		8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER DACW37-90-M-0135		
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)		10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS			
		PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.	TASK NO.	WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY OF BORROW AREAS FOR DAM 87, SOURIS RIVER BASIN PROJECT, WARD COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA.					
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) Kurt P. Schweigert; Richard Persinger					
13a. TYPE OF REPORT		13. TIME COVERED FROM _____ TO _____		14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 900600	
				15. PAGE COUNT 9 p.	
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION					
17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)		
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP	ARCHAEOLOGY		
			SOURIS RIVER (ND)		
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)					
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20. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT. <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS			21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified		
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL			22b. TELEPHONE (include Area Code)		22c. OFFICE SYMBOL

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ABSTRACT

A Class III cultural resource inventory was accomplished for two small borrow areas in the S1/2 of SE1/4 Section 5, T.157N-R.84W, within the Upper Souris National Wildlife Refuge. The surveyed areas encompass about 10 acres on the valley wall slopes of the Souris River. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District proposes to remove fill material from these areas. Cultural resources were not found within the proposed borrow areas. These proposed project areas are therefore recommended to contain "no historic properties" as defined under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.



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CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY OF BORROW AREAS FOR DAM 87,
SOURIS RIVER BASIN PROJECT, WARD COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA

Project Sponsor: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District
St. Paul, Minnesota

Project Identification: Proposed borrow areas for maintenance and construction of Dam 87, Souris River Basin Project.

Project Location: Project areas are portions of the following legal locations:

- Borrow Area #1: N1/2SW1/4SE1/4 Section 5, T.157N-R.84W, Ward County.
Borrow Area #2: E1/2SW1/4SE1/4 and W1/2SE1/4SE1/4 Section 5, T.157N-R.84W, Ward County.

Both project areas are within the Carpio NE Quadrangle.

Project Description:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is proposing to use these borrow areas as sources for fill material for the raising of Dam 87 on the Souris River near the borrow areas. Under applicable federal and state cultural resources protection laws and regulations, the Corps of Engineers must identify any cultural resources which might be affected by the proposed action, evaluate the significance of any such cultural resources, and determine the probable effects of the project to significant cultural resources. The present project includes only the proposed borrow areas; reconstruction or alteration of Dam 87 is not a focus of the present study. The present project is undertaken to address Corps of Engineers responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the National Environmental Policy Act, Executive Order 11593, the Archaeological Resource Protection Act, as amended, and 36CFR800.

Project Location and Setting

The proposed borrow areas are located near the base of the valley wall slope of the Souris River in extreme northern Ward County. Borrow Areas #1 and #2 are located on the northwest and southeast sides of an ephemeral drainage in a small coulee (see Figure 1). Both borrow areas are on toe slopes which extend from valley walls southwestward into the Souris River floodplain. The valley walls rise sharply to the north and east of the borrow areas, except that the coulee drainage mitigates the elevation rise to the northeast. The immediate project areas are in upland break topography dominated by short to medium sod grass ground cover and dendritic, deeply incised seasonal drainages which contain medium to tall prairie grasses and occasional thickets of

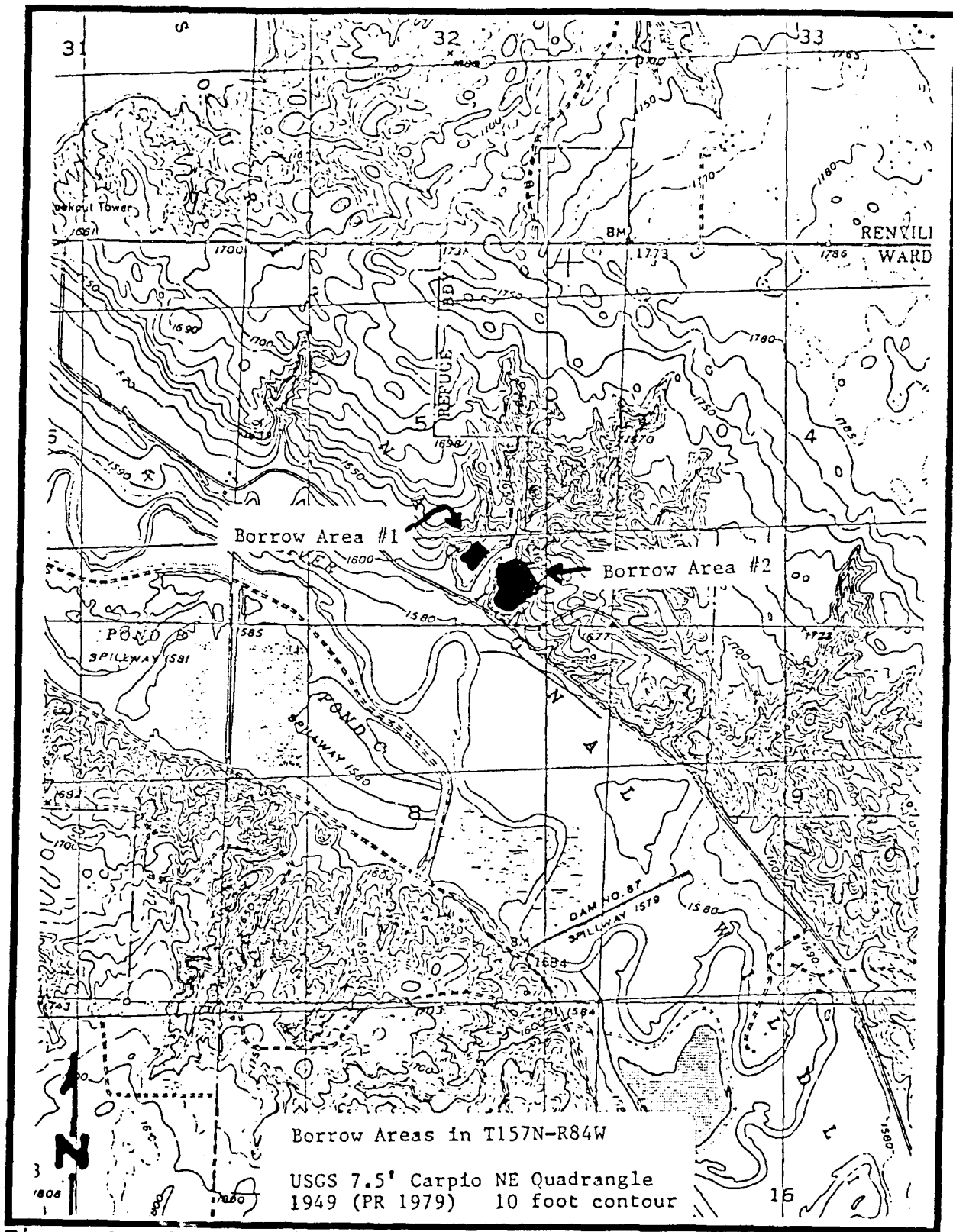


Figure 1: Topographic location of Borrow Areas 1 and 2.

wild plum, thornapple, juneberry, chokecherry, and other deciduous trees and shrubs.

The Souris valley floor to the southwest of the borrow areas is characteristically flat, about three-fourths mile wide, and has an active incised channel and numerous extinct channels represented by low oxbow trenches. The valley floor may have been affected by large-scale siltation since the 1930s, when a series of low dams were constructed to impound river water for propagation of waterfowl and other wildlife. Valley bottom lands in the vicinity of the proposed borrow areas contain mature hardwood forests and wetlands with attendant growth of cattails, sedges, and other aquatic, saline, and medium to tall terrestrial grasses.

The area supports an abundance of wildlife, including white-tailed deer, cottontail rabbits, jackrabbits, sharptail grouse, red fox, coyotes, mink, weasel, beaver, muskrat, and all species of migratory waterfowl common to this area of the Northern Plains. Similar variety and abundance of wildlife can be projected for this area during prehistoric times, and this area would have been favorable for occupation or use by nomadic or semi-nomadic hunter-gatherer peoples. In historic times, the area supported a ranching and farming economy prior to the consolidation of the land parcels into the Upper Souris National Wildlife Refuge. Natural resources and cultural history of the upper Souris River Valley in general are discussed at length in Whitehurst et al. (1989).

Files Search

An intensive files search was conducted on September 9, 1989, by Shirley Bard of Cultural Research & Management, Inc. North Dakota Cultural Resource Survey site files, previous research files, site leads files, isolated finds files, and architectural site files of the State Historical Society of North Dakota were searched to determine if any cultural resources had been recorded or reported in the vicinity of the project areas or if previous cultural resource investigations had included the project areas. The files search for the present project was included in a much larger files search for a general survey of this portion of the Souris River Valley.

One cultural resource site had been recorded in the vicinity of the project area: 32WD413, CCC Camp Maurek, in SW1/4 NW1/4 Section 5, T.157N, R.84W. This site was recorded by Kurt Schweigert in 1978. Two previous cultural resource investigations had included the present project area: a general archaeological survey of portions of the Souris River Valley (Good, Fox, and Nicolai 1978), and an associated historical cultural resource investigation (Schweigert 1979). One additional cultural resource investigation was on-going at the

time of the files search and was accessioned to the files/manuscript collection after the files search was completed: a survey and evaluation of dams and CCC facilities along the Souris River (McCormick and Quivik 1989). The Good, Fox, and Nicolai study apparently covered the present project areas in a general archaeological survey, but neither of the historical investigations addressed the present specific project areas.

Field Inventory

The proposed borrow areas were intensively surveyed by archaeologists Richard Persinger, M.A., and Robert Christensen on November 6, 1989. All portions of the borrow areas were inspected by walking parallel and overlapping transects, with transects no more than 15 meters wide. Rodent borrows, erosional areas, and other areas offering especially good surface visibility were given special inspection to better determine if cultural materials were present and whether surface and subsurface conditions were favorable for existence of otherwise obscured cultural materials. The borrow areas were found to have a ground cover of low, drought-diminished sod grasses, and surface visibility was generally adequate (10%-25% of surface visible). Weather and light conditions were also adequate during the field examination of the borrow areas.

Results of Field Inventory

No cultural resources were found within the proposed borrow areas, and conditions do not seem favorable for existence of cultural materials in a buried context. The surface visibility at the time of the survey was generally adequate to determine if cultural materials existed at the surface. The two borrow areas occupy gently sloping knobs which topographically could conceivably have supported small, short-term campsites, but evidence observed in rodent burrows and other disturbances indicates that soil development is very shallow on these knobs. The shallow soil development and lack of observed cultural materials recommend that cultural resource sites do not exist in these proposed borrow areas.

Management Recommendations

No cultural resources were found in the project areas, and it is unlikely that undiscovered archaeological resources exist in buried contexts within the project areas. These areas are therefore recommended to contain "no historic properties" as defined under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Clearance of these sites as sources of earthen fill is recommended.

References Cited

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Photo 12082: Borrow Area No. 1, View to West



Photo 12083: Borrow Area No. 1, View to SE.



Photo 12080: Borrow Area No. 2, View to NW



Photo 12081: Borrow Area No. 2, View to West